

DEATH  
TOLL

IN SRI  
LANKA'S

2009  
WAR

INTERNATIONAL  
TRUTH  
AND JUSTICE  
PROJECT

# DEATH TOLL IN SRI LANKA 2009 WAR

NOT INCLUDING THE REPORTED DEATHS OF TENS OF  
THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS, LTTE CADRES AND CIVILIANS  
BEFORE 2009

SOURCE FOR 2009 WAR CASUALTY ESTIMATES <sup>1</sup>	DEAD	INJURED <sup>2</sup>	TOTAL
<b>January - April 2009 - UN real time survey</b>			
UN (Crisis Operation Group) triangulated data. <sup>3</sup> [Cited in the "Gash Telexes"]	7,737	18,479	26,216*
UN (Crisis Operation Group) all data. <sup>4</sup>	17,810	36,905	54,715
<b>Plus Last Week of war - UN estimate in 2009</b>			
US Government citing UN shelter analysis data for period 10 - 18 May 2009. <sup>5</sup>			7 - 17,000
US Government citing LTTE casualty number it says UN thinks is inflated. <sup>6</sup>			25,000
<b>January - May 2009 final war - UN estimates</b>			
UN (Petrie report) estimated total unaccounted for in 2009 war. <sup>7</sup>	70,000		
UN Panel of Experts - estimated civilians.	40,000		
War Without Witness report - all named individuals and some with photos. <sup>8</sup>			19,700
Enumeration by GOSL <sup>9</sup> - civilians and combatants missing.	7,000	2,500	9,500
<b>Vanni Population before &amp; after the war - estimates based on subtractions</b>	UNACCOUNTED		
360,000 people in NFZ on 22 Jan.2009; minus 272,380 survivors - TNA.	87,620		
330,000 <sup>10</sup> people in No Fire Zone early Feb. +35,000 outside in camps; 282,000 survived.	83,000	0	
429,000 <sup>11</sup> people in Vanni as of Oct 2008; 282,000 survived (Bishop of Mannar).	147,000	0	
World Bank household data. <sup>12</sup>	169,796	0	
Crisis Group missing Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu populations. <sup>13</sup>	100,000		

# FOOTNOTES

Cover photos courtesy of War Without Witness report, <http://www.warwithoutwitness.com/victims-of-sri-lankan-governments-genocidal-war-20000-identities-cases-confirmed-by-war-without-witness/>

1. This does not include the 23,586 missing reported to the Paranagama Commission from the entire war period [http://nirmin.gov.lk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=127:office-on-missing-persons-omp&catid=9&Itemid=208&lang=en](http://nirmin.gov.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=127:office-on-missing-persons-omp&catid=9&Itemid=208&lang=en).

2. It is unclear what proportion of the injured died; there was a lack of hospitals, surgeons and drugs in the 'No Fire Zones' and in the latter months of the war, the seriously injured had to survive an arduous journey by boat to reach medical care outside the war zone. Only 14,000 were evacuated from the NFZs which is much less than the total number of recorded injuries.

3. Petrie report annex (§211) citing COG data.

The UN Crisis Operation Group which was set up to collect casualty information long distance by phone. The team were extremely conservative in their enumeration, only citing those casualties for which they could find three independent sources (triangulation). They stopped collecting data in the last three weeks of the war when the casualties were at their worst.

The Petrie report says the UN Crisis Operation Group (COG) team was, nevertheless certain that it was only receiving reports of a small proportion of the actual number of casualties. In addition, as time went on the number of casualties is thought to have risen dramatically while the capacity of the COG to obtain three independent sources for each casualty became harder. In the last few weeks the intensity of the fighting made the collection of data extremely difficult."

4. Petrie report, op cit.

5. [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09COLOMB0539\\_a.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09COLOMB0539_a.html)

US State Department report 2009: "Harm to civilians and civilian objects—The State Department has not received casualty estimates covering the entire reporting period; sources alleged that a significant number of deaths and injuries incurred at the time of attack were likely never recorded. .. This is because the majority of casualty statistics were based upon the deaths of people transferred to medical facilities or reported by eyewitnesses to attacks. Sources alleged that a significant number of deaths and injuries incurred at the time of an attack were likely never recorded."

6. [https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09COLOMB0539\\_a.html](https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09COLOMB0539_a.html)

7. Petrie report, §34.

8. <http://www.warwithoutwitness.com/victims-of-sri-lankan-governments-genocidal-war-20000-identities-cases-confirmed-by-war-without-witness/>

UN COG says it only identified 25.7% of the dead and injured. That raises the question of whether the War Without Witness list of named individuals is also a small fraction of the total.

9. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/sri-lankas-dead-and-missing-need-accounting>

10. Additional Government Agent figure; <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/sri-lankas-dead-and-missing-need-accounting> and also Government Agent 365,0000.

11. See Crisis Group – figures from documents from the local government offices in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts, dated 30 September and 1 October 2008. Also: [http://www.jdslanka.org/images/documents/tna\\_response\\_llrc\\_report.pdf](http://www.jdslanka.org/images/documents/tna_response_llrc_report.pdf)

12.

World Bank Data	Households 2007 Government data	Est. Households once resettlement complete	Missing households	Missing ppl (assuming 4)
Mullaitivu	54,336	28,889	25,447	101,788
Kilinochchi	53,049 <sup>12</sup>	36,047	17,002	68,008
				<b>169,796</b>

13. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/sri-lankas-dead-and-missing-need-accounting>